

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

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SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USDEL MBFR VIENNA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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UNCLAS NATO 06652

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FOR: VIENNA FOR FERNANDEZ FROM CLAUSSEN; USIA FOR IEU:COHEN

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: "ATLANTIC NEWS" REPORT ON MBFR

1. FOLLOWING TEXT APPEARED IN "ATLANTIC NEWS" DATED JULY 8, 1977, UNDER HEADING "EAST "SCRAPES BOTTOM OF BARRELL" IN VIENNA: BEGIN TEXT:

2. WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES, AT THE 142ND PLENARY SESSION OF VIENNA TALKS ON A REDUCTION OF FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE (MBFR), INVOKED A 23-YEAR-OLD AGREEMENT TO BACK DEMANDS FOR A LIMIT ON THE SIZE OF WEST GERMANY'S ARMED FORCES.

3. THE POLISH REPRESENTATIVE, SLAWOMIR DABROWA, TOLD THE UNCLASSIFIED

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OTHER PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES THAT "PAST INTERNATIONAL TREATIES" SETTING LIMITS ON ARMAMENTS AND ARMED FORCES MUST BE OBSERVED, AND THAT NOTHING SHOULD BE DONE TO "TRY TO NULLIFY LIMITATIONS ON NATIONAL ARMAMENTS AND FORCES WHICH ALREADY EXIST IN EUROPE UNDER PAST INTERNATIONAL TREATIES". THE WARSAW PACT SPOKESMAN STATED AT A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE END OF THE SESSION (OF 30 JUNE) THAT THE POLISH

DELEGATE WAS REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO A 1954 WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION AGREEMENT UNDER WHICH FEDERAL GERMANY HAD AGREED TO LIMIT ITS ARMAMENTS PRODUCTION AND PUT A CEILING ON ITS ARMED FORCES.

4. ACCORDING TO WESTERN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN FOUR YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS THAT THE WARSAW PACT HAS INVOKED THIS 1954 AGREEMENT TO BACK UP ITS DEMANDS FOR "NATIONAL CEILINGS" IN THE CONTEXT OF AN EVENTUAL GLOBAL TROOP REDUCTION AGREEMENT. A SPOKESMAN FOR NATO COUNTRIES TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE SAME OPPORTUNITY TO REITERATE THAT THERE IS NO AGREEMENT BETWEEN EAST AND WEST ON A (BEGIN UNDERLINE) LIMITATION OF NATIONAL ARMIES, AN IDEA WHICH HAS ALWAYS BEEN UNACCEPTABLE TO NATO, (END UNDERLINE) WHICH FOR A LONG TIME HAS BEEN ADVOCATING THE SETTING UP OF A COMMON AND COLLECTIVE CEILING FOR EACH OF THE TWO MILITARY PACTS.

5. ALTHOUGH THE INVOKING BY THE EAST OF THIS WEU AGREEMENT IMMEDIATELY GIVES THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PACT IS IN THE PROCESS, ACCORDING TO A NATO SOURCES, OF "SCRAPING THE BOTTOM OF THE BARREL" IN ORDER TO FIND REASONS TO SUPPORT ITS "NATIONAL CEILINGS" ARGUMENT, THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE STATEMENTS BY THE EAST LIES RATHER IN THE FACT THAT IT IS THE FIRST TIME THE EAST HAS PUBLICLY ANKNOWLEDGED THAT ITS ARGUMENT IS AIMED MAINLY AT FRG FORCES. FOR A LONG UNCLASSIFIED

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TIME IT HAS BEEN CLEAR TO THE WEST THAT THE EAST'S INSISTENCE ON THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL CEILINGS WAS INTENDED TO CONTROL THE BUNDESWEHR AND TO PREVENT ITS DEVELOPMENT, BUT THE PACT DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE EVER PREVIOUSLY ADMITTED THIS FACT.

6. IN NATO CIRCLES THERE IS A VERY DEFINITE ATTEMPT TO MINIMISE THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS "DEBATING POINT", FOR IN ANY EVENT EASTERN COUNTRIES DID NOT SIGN THESE 1954 AGREEMENTS, WHICH DEALT WITH THE FRG'S ACCESSION TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY. END TEXT. CLAUSSEN

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